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ABSTRACT

This book provides a brief historical review of outcomes assessment in higher education and a general guide to designing, implementing, and evaluating assessment programs. Chapter 1 provides several definitions of commonly used terms and a review of the major actors and the political context. It identifies factors contributing to the recent push for assessment. Chapter 2 reviews the history of outcomes assessment testing in the United States including landmark studies, several special studies, and a historical review of the development of national achievement tests. Chapter 3 focuses on federal and state initiatives that stimulated the recent surge of student assessment efforts in Florida, Tennessee, and New Jersey. Chapter 4 looks at the roots of outcomes assessment as it has evolved through accrediting agencies. Chapter 5 poses a life cycle concept as typically applied to business organizations to aid the design and implementation of student assessment programs. Chapter 6 summarizes the main ideas in the book and offers some suggestions for evaluating the effectiveness of the assessment effort at institutions of higher education. An appendix contains federal legislation affecting student outcomes assessment and case examples of student initiatives at the state level, the institutional level, and the department or program level. An index and a 116-item bibliography are included. (JB)

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